

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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C O N F I D E N T I A L ISTANBUL 5111

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, ELAB, TU
SUBJECT: DISK LABOR CONFEDERATION ELECTS NEW LEADERSHIP

SUMMARY: TURKEY'S LEFTIST LABOR CONFEDERATION
(DISK) ELECTED NEW LEADERSHIP
WITH CLOSER TIES TO OPPOSITION REPUBLICAN PEOPLES PARTY (RPP).
THREATENED SPLIT AVERTED THROUGH COMPROMISES WHICH INCLUDED
CONVENTION ENDORSEMENT OF MANY POLICIES OF FORMER, MORE LEFTIST,
LEADERSHIP INCLUDING DISK OPPOSITION TO TURKISH ASSOCIATION
WITH NATO, CENTO AND EEC. ALTHOUGH MORE MODERATE THAN THIS PREDECESSOR
NEW PRESIDENT OF DISK MAY NOT BE COMPLETELY TRACTABLE ALLY OF RPP.
HOWEVER, ON EVE OF RPP'S POSSIBLE RETURN TO POWER, HIS ELECTION
WILL PROBABLY ATTENUATE THAT PARTY'S EMBARRASSMENT OVER ITS POLITICAL
ALLIANCE WITH DISK DURING RECENT LEFTIST DRIFT OF CONFEDERATION.

1. ABDULLAH BASTURK WAS ELECTED PRESIDENT OF DISK, TURKEY'S SECOND
LARGEST LABOR CONFEDERATION AT CONVENTION HELD DECEMBER 22-28
IN ISTANBUL. TASTURK, PRESIDENT OF DISK'S LARGEST AFFILIATE,
MUNICIPAL WORKER'S UNION (GENEL IS), REPLACES KEMAL TURKLER
WHO HAD HEADED THIS INCREASINGLY LEFTIST-ORIENTED CONFEDERATION
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FOR TEN YEARS. IN 1976, DISK, UNDER TURKLER'S LEADERSHIP, BROKE
AWAY FROM TURK-IS, COUNTRY'S LARGEST AND MORE MODERATE NATIONAL TRADE
UNION CONFEDERATION. ELECTION OF BASTURK MARKS VICTORY
FOR MORE MODERATE UNION LEADERS IN DISK WHO ARE CLOSELY
ASSOCIATED WITH REPUBLICAN PEOPLES PARTY(RPP) AND WHO
OPPOSED DISK'S DRIFT TO THE LEFT. BASTURK HIMSELF IS FORMER RPP
DEPUTY AND SEVERAL OF HIS ALLIES IN MOVE TO OUST TURKLER

WERE RPP CANDIDATES IN JUNE ELECTIONS THIS YEAR.

2. MANY OBSERVERS HAD PREDICTED SPLIT IN DISK FROM BASTURK TURKLER CONFRONTATION. WEEK-LONG CONVENTION WAS NOT WITHOUT STORMY MOMENTS INCLUDING FISTICUFFS BUT BASTURK WHO COMMANDED STRONG MAJORITY OF DELEGATES APPARENTLY WORKED OUT COMPROMISE WITH TURKLER WHICH AT LEAST ON FACE OF IT PRESERVED CONFEDERATION UNITY. BASTURK GOT PRESIDENCY AND APPEARS TO HAVE PACKED EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND ADMINISTRATIVE BOARD WITH HIS SUPPORTERS, THUS ENDING PREDOMINANT POSITION OF TURKLER'S HOME UNION, MADEN-IS (METALWORKERS), IN DISK RULING BODIES. IN EXCHANGE, KEY JOB OF CONFEDERATION GENERAL SECRETARY WENT TO TURKLER MAN AND TASTURK ABANDONED HIS PROPOSAL THAT DISK MOVE ITS HEADQUARTERS FROM ISTANBUL, WHERE MADEN-IS IS STRONGEST, TO ANKARA WHERE HIS OWN POSER-BASE, GENEL-IS, HAS ITS OFFICES. IN ADDITION, CONVENTION ENDORSED TURKLER POSITION THAT TURKEY SHOULD LEAVE NATO AND CENTO AND CUT TIES WITH EEC AND AT LEAST PARTIALLY ENDORSE PARTICIPATION IN TURKLER'S BRAIN-CHILD, NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT, A CONTROVERSIAL PROJECT WHICH ALLIED DISK WITH GROUP OF EXTREME LEFTIST ORGANIZATIONS IN OPPOSITION TO NATIONAL FRONT GOVERNMENT. RPP'S BULENT ECEVIT REJECTED ASSOCIATING HIS PARTY WITH THIS GROUP, AND THIS DECISION APPARENTLY SPARKED RPP PARTISANS IN DISK TO INITIATE MOVEMENT TO END TURKELR'S HOLD ON POWER.

3. LEADER OF TURKEY'S HALF-DOZEN "SOCIALIST" PARTIES AND OTHER
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LEFTIST PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS WHICH SUPPORTED NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT ATTENDED OPENING SESSION AND ADDRESSED CONVENTION. INDICATIVE OF DISK'S INCREASINGLY CLOSE TIES WITH COMMUNIST LABOR MOVEMENT, ALSO THERE WERE NUMBER OF UNION LEADERS INVIGED FROM EASTERN EUROPEAN BLOC COUNTRIES. LEADING RPP REPRESENTATIVE PRESENT WAS NEWLY-ELECTED MAYOR OF ISTANBUL.

4. COMMENT: IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES WITHIN DISK WHICH PIT "SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC" FACTION WITH RPP TIES AGAINST MORE EXTREME MARXIST ELEMENTS, REMAIN, AND DISSENSION WITHIN CONFEDERATION UNLIKELY TO END. TURKLER REMAINS HEAD OF POWERFUL AND WELL-DISCIPLINED MADEN-IS, AND HIS POTENTIAL FOR DISRUPTION IN THEREFORE CONSIDERABLE. ON EVE OF HIS POSSIBLY BECOMING HEAD OF NEW GOVERNMENT, EMBARRASSMENT CAUSED ECEVIT BY HIS POLITICAL ALLIANCE WITH DISK IN FACE OF EXTREME LEFTIST TENDENCIES OF CONFEDERATION MAY NOW BE ATTENUATED. HOWEVER, RPP WILL NOT NECESSARILY FIND BASTURK A TRACTABLE ALLY. HIS OWN IDEOLOGY IS SOMEWHAT TO LEFT OF RPP MAINSTREAM, AND HE IS UNDOUBTEDLY EMBITTERED BY PARTY'S FAILURE TO ASSURE HIS RE-ELECTION TO NATIONAL ASSEMBLY IN JUNE.
HOUGHTON

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ELECTED NEW LEADERSHIP
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